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THE COMMERCIAL AWAKENING OF THE MORO AND PAGAN

BY MAJOR JOHN P. FINLEY, UNITED STATES ARMY

IN the United States the army has been the forerunner of civilization throughout our great Western empire, preparing vast territories for Statehood and cementing an indissoluble union. It has helped the Cuban people to take all the successive steps necessary to the establishment of their own constitutional government and transferred that government to them amid universal expressions of friendship and good-will. It co-operated with the navy in breaking the power of Spain in the Pacific and in acquiring dominion therein, which suddenly elevated the United States to a world power and severed the bonds of provincialism. It has crushed and terminated a great insurrection, February 4, 1899, to July 4, 1902, in the vast Philippine Archipelago, with its 3,141 islands and islets and its total land and water area of 832,968 square miles. It reared a stable government upon the ashes of the Philippine insurrection and transferred the body politic intact and vigorous to the civil authorities on July 1, 1901.

Thus from a state of enervating peace the military forces of the country were suddenly mobilized, following the destruction of the *Maine* on February 15, 1898, and never ceased from incessant conflict until the proclamation of peace and amnesty in the Philippines, issued by the President on July 4, 1902. The dual process by which the military power had steadily and consistently acquired control, and exercised the authority of government over the various provinces of the Archipelago and, at the same time, had been superseded progressively by civil administration, was then terminated, and a complete system of civil government, constructed under the President's instructions of April 7, 1900,

was in operation ready to proceed under the authority of Congress as expressed in the Philippine Government Act of July 1, 1902.

The establishment of civil government in the Christian provinces of the Philippines did not separate the army from another function devolving upon it, in the control and development of the Moros and Pagans of the southern islands of the Archipelago.

The instructions of the President to the Philippine Commission of April 7, 1900, contained the following reference to these people:

"In dealing with the uncivilized tribes of the Islands the Commission should adopt the same course followed by Congress in permitting the tribes of our North-American Indians to maintain their tribal organization and government, and under which many of those tribes are now living in peace and contentment, surrounded by a civilization to which they are unable or unwilling to conform. Such tribal governments should, however, be subjected to wise and firm regulation, and without undue or petty interference constant and active effort should be exercised to prevent barbarous practices and introduce civilized customs."

These instructions also provide that the military forces in the Philippines shall be at all times subject, under the orders of the military commander, to the call of the civil authorities for the maintenance of law and order and for the enforcement of their authority.

The above instructions were approved and adopted by Congress on July 1, 1902, and the Secretary of War directed that they would continue to guide the civil and military authorities in the Philippines in their dealings with the Moros and Pagans.

In regard to the control of the non-Christian tribes, Mr. Root as Secretary of War, said:

"The questions to be worked out in that process are altogether apart from the general questions of government in the Philippines, and such measures of force as are necessary to control the various Moro tribes have no more relation to the recent Philippine insurrection than our troubles with the Sioux or the Apaches had to do with the suppression of the Southern Rebellion."

Thus we have presented a distinct announcement of the Moro problem, and of its general relation to the other problems in the Philippines, before the Government of the United States.

After the inauguration of Judge Taft (President of the Philippine Commission) as the first American Civil Gov-

ernor of the Philippines on July 4, 1901, he early gave consideration to the Moro problem and said, in his annual report for 1901:

"It is evident that if we are not to fail in our duty toward the savage or half-civilized people of these islands, active measures must be taken for the gathering of reliable information concerning them as a basis for legislation."

This view of the matter resulted in the enactment of a law providing for the organization and operation of the Bureau of Non-Christian Tribes, which was later absorbed, by further legislation, into the Bureau of Science, now the home of the principal scientific divisions of the Insular Government.

From the study thus engaged in Governor Taft proceeded, by his usual thorough and conservative methods, to the development of a special form of government to deal with the complex and peculiar questions confronting the civil and military authorities in the Moro country. It was a deep and perplexing study, for no precedent existed in the United States that fully measured up to the requirements of the situation. Our Indian problems were somewhat similar, but the details of administration and the powerful influences of caste and religion had to be worked out on a different basis. The final result of this absorbing application to the essentials of a new subject was the enactment by the Philippine Commission on June 1, 1903, of Act No. 787 as the organic law of the Moro Province. Its law-making body was styled the legislative council, and the enacting clause of its laws required the form, "by authority of the Philippine Commission, be it enacted by the legislative council of the Moro Province." The semi-independent character of this new government can be seen by comparing its law-enacting clause with that required of the Commission, as "by authority of the United States, be it enacted by the Philippine Commission." An examination of the organic act shows that the Commission granted to the legislative council a very large measure of discretion in dealing with the Moros (Mohammedans) and in preserving, as far as possible, consistent with the fundamental act, the customs of the Moros, the authority of the Datus, and a system of justice in which Moros and Pagans could take part.

Having thus provided for a rational system of administering justice among the non-Christians, attention was directed to their industrial development. Both of these fields of

social and physical betterment had been neglected under Spanish dominion. The main idea with the Spanish conquerors was the spread of Catholicism and the establishment of the authority of the Papal Church. The various orders of the Church engaged in considerable conflict over the assignment of territory, methods of administration, and the accumulation of property. Both Moros and Pagans resisted with violence the proselytism of these orders. Dogmatic frontal attacks upon their systems of religion were not calculated to gain their confidence and co-operation. All attempts at conversion to Christianity among the Moros resulted in complete failure. The natives stood in dire need of industrial and educational betterment and would have welcomed such assistance. A very large measure of the three hundred years of irritation, conflict, rapine and degradation could have been avoided by the more rational line of approach. For centuries the hill people (Pagans and farmers) and the coast people (Mohammedans and traders) had been and were still in serious conflict, because at variance in matters of religion and trade. The Spanish Missionaries, with a combination of Church and State, widened the breach of discord between the Moros and Pagans by forcibly introducing another system of religion, opposed to each class of natives, and ignoring entirely the only feasible plan of amalgamation, through harmonizing the trade relations of the factional races. With the advent of American control, involving a separation of Church and State, the irritating element of a new religion, imposed as part of the system of government, was avoided at the outset. When this fact was made clear to the Moros and Pagans by Governor Finley, through numerous public meetings (*bicharas*) held with them, a bond of sympathy and a basis of co-operation began to be established, which has steadily grown in strength and influence. Taking advantage of this favorable situation, Governor Finley sought to remove the animosities in trade relations, between the hill people and the coast people, a matter of vast importance to each of the two races and of vital import to the Government in establishing a successful system of control over these people. Similar conditions gave rise in 1904-1907 to the great Pulajan insurrection in the island of Samar between the Pulajans (hill people) and the Dagattaus (coast people), finally terminated by the provisions of Act 1,759, Philippine

Commission, of October 10, 1907, establishing proper trade relations between these factions. The hill people crave salt, sea foods, and manufactured articles, whereas the coast people demand for food, vegetables, cereals and tobacco; and for trade a large variety of forest products only gathered by the hill people. These articles are the products of totally different occupations among Moros and Pagans, and so maintained with much scrupulosity between hill tribes and coast tribes, as, for example, between the Yakans and the Samals, and between the Subanuns and Kalibugans.

In the matter of manufactured articles, such as cloth, beads, steel, gambier, wire, and so forth, the hill people have traded at coast towns with Chinese, Europeans and Filipinos, and have generally suffered seriously through graft and extortion. The exchange would be made in kind and the ignorant farmer from the hills, not informed as to the current market prices, would be swindled unmercifully. This form of imposition, in addition to the *pamuka* system of enforced taxation, carried out by the native chiefs, reduced the *taus* (common people) to a state of cruel bondage, deprived them of everything but scanty subsistence, and accumulated debts which were deliberately employed to enslave the debtor and his family.

In his annual report for 1904 General Wood wrote on this subject:

"There has been much said about the paternal form of Moro slavery, but after a year of almost continuous contact with the Moros, in all of the principal districts of the Moro Province, it can be stated that it would be difficult to imagine a worse form of slavery. The slave had absolutely no rights. His wife, his daughters, and his property were entirely subject to the will of his owner, and he himself could be sold or even killed with impunity."

From the inception of the Moro problem, under American control, to the present time the slavery question has received the earnest attention and the most humane consideration due it, by the successive commanding generals of the Department of Mindanao and Jolo, from the days of General Bates to the present régime of General Pershing. The slave Act No. 8 of the Moro Province was prepared by General Wood and enacted by the legislative council September 24, 1903.

In October and November, 1903, Governor Finley called at Zamboanga the first durbars or conferences ever held

among the Moros and Pagans, and which were attended by several thousand people. At these meetings slavery, the prohibition of the possession and use of firearms and cutting weapons, the opening of markets and other public questions were discussed, and, as far as practicable, the purpose and policy of the American Government were announced. Following the meetings, Governor Finley spent much time in visiting the principal Moro *rancherias*, looking into the surroundings and needs of the people and selecting locations for markets and trading-places, ascertaining native products and their values, and pointing the way for better trading and more profitable methods of agriculture. The natives were also instructed regarding the introduction and use of the standard currency of the Philippines and how to exchange debased coins for the new standard. In all of this work the Moros and Pagans took deep interest, especially the common people. Too often it was apparent that the chiefs were not in favor of a change that meant the independence of their ignorant followers. But the leaven soon began to work and the real producers of the country were eager to learn from Governor Finley his plans for their industrial emancipation. Then began a series of meetings at which the plans and purposes of the Moro Exchange system were unfolded to the anxious and earnest tillers of the soil, who longed for freedom from the terrors of slavery and the crushing burdens of the *pamuka* system of taxation. These long-suffering people eagerly subscribed their mites (offering stock, products or money, according to their possessions) to aid in the construction of the parent Moro Exchange at Zamboanga, which was completed and opened with a great celebration and fiesta on September 1, 1904. All classes of people joined with the government officials in making the occasion a notable event. The Moros and Pagans crowded the big market-place with their products and wares, which by nightfall were almost entirely disposed of. In that unique emporium of wild men, the first of its kind ever gathered under the tropical sun of Moro land, slaves jostled masters and felt the first thrills of freedom and the quickening impulse of self-control, in the possession of that which was lawfully and rightfully theirs, as the product of their own ingenuity and labor. Thus opened the first (parent) exchange and trading store in the history of Moro land, formally and lawfully established under the

provisions of Act No. 55 of the legislative council of the Moro Province, enacted June 14, 1904.

Since then to June 30, 1911, branch exchanges and trading stores have been established at thirty other Moro *rancherias* in the District of Zamboanga and at several *rancherias* in the other districts of the Moro Province.

As a consequence the volume of business has steadily increased as has also the general prosperity among the Moros and Pagans. More of the standard money of the Islands is in circulation among these people than ever before in their history. Through the association made possible by these exchanges a much better feeling of sympathy and helpfulness has arisen between the Mohammedans and Pagans. The former have become more tolerant in their religious views and more willing to seek co-operation for mutual benefit along the lines of commercial and agricultural development. The Moros are now disposed to look upon the despised and hated Pagan hill people as worthy of consideration, because, through the influence of commercial association, developed by the Moro Exchange system, these natural and long-time enemies have found a common ground on which they can get together, and profit more by friendly association and business ventures than by the process of slavery and extermination.

The Moros and Pagans in Spanish times never took kindly to direct taxation, as made necessary through the imposition of the *cedula*, or poll tax, and the requirements for service on public works. Although accustomed to such a system of imposts as part of their feudal form of government yet the common people always resented the collection of this form of revenue, whether obtained in kind or in legal tender. The chiefs and their *sakopes* (immediate followers) maintained the system as their only means of support, and it was so regulated that it never failed to bring returns, either in money or kind, or in human flesh.

When the American system replaced the feudal one and generally subjected all classes of people to the same imposts, and applied the provisions of law impartially, the chiefs and *sakopes* protested for their immunity, because of class distinction and inability to labor. But they were told that the Moro Exchange system opened the way for them to engage in profitable trade, and that, under the supervision of the government, every man would have an equal chance,

and all participants would soon find a satisfactory return from the results of honest and efficient labor. Thus the Moro Exchange system has become the active agent for awakening the commercial spirit of the uncivilized tribes of the southern islands of the Philippines, has become a powerful instrument for peace and unity among Moros and Pagans, and is serving the public by materially aiding in the collection of public revenues, and thus providing for the general progress of the community.

Since 1907 the Moro Exchange system, first organized in 1903 by Governor Finley in the Moro Province, has been carried into other provinces of the Philippines by the Department of the Interior. In his annual report for 1910 Commissioner Worcester, Secretary of the Interior, says:

"In my opinion, the next important step we should take in stimulating the development of the hill tribes of northern Luzon is to develop trade among them as actively as possible. With this end in view, government exchanges have been started at various places in the Mountain Province and in Nueva Vizcaya. An effort is made to keep these trading stores supplied with the things the people in their vicinity most need. Sales are made at twenty per cent. above cost to defray expenses of maintenance. The exchanges also buy basket-work, wood carvings, weapons and articles of dress which can readily be sold as curios, paying a good price for them in cash. The vender is free to spend his money as he prefers.

"In the Province of Agusan, Mindanao, the exchanges for the use of Pagans are known collectively as the Manobo Stores. In the Province of Palawan the exchanges for the benefit of the Tagbanuas and Moros promise considerable business in the near future."

Commercial development through the Moro Exchange system has opened the way for agricultural development through the agency of the tribal-ward farm system.

In 1907 Governor Finley began to develop the idea of the tribal-ward farm, with a view to encourage the Moros and Pagans to understand, appreciate, and benefit by the homestead provisions of the Philippine Public Land Act. The homestead of sixteen *hectares* (forty acres) is open to every adult non-Christian who is a native of the Philippines, and the cadastral system of surveys and titles inaugurated by Governor-General Forbes and earnestly applied by General Pershing has made it easy and safe for the Moros and Pagans to become landholders under the law.

The tribal-ward farm is established at each tribal-ward headquarters in the District of Zamboanga and consists of the forty acres of homestead authorized by law. The proper

cultivation of this little farm, under the supervision of government officials, enables the natives of each tribe to observe modern methods of agriculture, their effect in the production of good crops, and in overcoming natural difficulties in plant growth. The tribal-ward farm can be so conducted as to distribute seeds, cuttings and plants, to improve poultry and stock, and to materially aid in defraying the expenses of tribal-ward administration. Thus the Moros and Pagans will be led by daily example, encouragement and incentive to adopt the homestead method and become sources of permanent production in place of parasitic nomads.

Lord Roberts during his long service in India sometimes established and maintained chains of public markets in order to get in touch with the wild tribesmen and lay the foundation for peaceful trade, agricultural development and self-government. He said that these markets

"aided the army in maintaining a useful line of communication and provided for friendly intercourse among tribes who for generations had been at feud with one another. They found in these markets a common ground on which they could meet without cutting throats. These markets by stimulating trade with the troops and with neighboring people resulted in opening the country by means of roads, thus facilitating intercommunication."

It has been clearly evident to the army during its occupation of the southern islands that the regeneration of the uncivilized tribes of that region must be accomplished along industrial lines. That to break the hold of piracy, slavery and degrading peonage, and to substitute therefor the foundation of first principles in popular self-government, among the Moros and Pagans, will require an indefinite period of military control, in accordance with the accepted methods of dual authority, as exemplified in the politico-military system devised by Governor Taft, authorized by the Philippine Commission, and now being worked out by the provincial government at Zamboanga.

In this connection it is well to keep in mind the fact that the Moros and Pagans have informed the Secretary of War and the Governor-General of the Philippines, in public meetings at Zamboanga, that they will not submit to Filipino*

* Filipinos (eight tribes) are Roman Catholic Christians. Moros (twelve tribes) are Mohammedan non-Christians. Pagans (forty-three tribes) are nature-worshiping non-Christians. These are the three native religious classes of the Philippines.

control but resort to arms against it should political change result in removing American authority in the southern islands. The Moros desire a continuance of the American military control under which they have existed and progressed since May 19, 1899. They feel that frequent change in authority is not conducive to their well-being, and as they have learned to regard the American army as being strict but just, true to its promises, honest in its dealings with them, impartial in its judgments, and wholly tolerant in religion, it is to the interest of all Mohammedans that such military control should remain undisturbed in the Moro Province. The continued exercise of such authority will avoid serious outbreaks, due to racial animosities, that have been rampant and very destructive in the Philippines, between Mohammedans and Christians, for more than three hundred years. And it will develop a form of administration that will secure a more perfect knowledge of their human nature and therefore a deeper insight into, and greater sympathy with, the feelings and prejudices of these Malaysians.

JOHN P. FINLEY.